

magonia

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Magonia is a journal devoted to the broad examination of anomalous phenomena and their interaction with society and the individual. It is published by the editors, and has no connection with any other magazine or group.

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In this issue:

WHY CRACOE FELL

The Rise and Fall of a UFO Investigation
David Clarke

ONE MEASURES A CIRCLE

Witches, Polts and Bols
Peter Rogerson

MAGNETISM & ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMANS

Paul Tinnan

Letters ... Reviews ... Columns

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EDITORIAL NOTES

It was rather bad mannered of us to spring our major format change onto readers last issue without some warning or explanation. We apologise particularly to those *Magonia* readers who have their copies of this organ lovingly bound up in gold-tooled morocco with hand-marbled endpapers.

The new format however does make it much quicker and easier to produce the magazine; the page layouts can be done on screen without the time consuming messiness of the cut and paste methods used hitherto. It also enables much of the work to be spread amongst the editorial team (i.e. John Harney - see his computer column on page 12).

This should mean that in future we will be able to bring *Magonia* out more closely to its quarterly schedule. It also means that the magazine now contains more than ever - equivalent to over thirty pages of the old format.

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Magonia's basic USA subscription has remained unchanged at \$5.00 since 1979; at last we are obliged to change it, to take into account rising costs and the falling value of the dollar. With this issue our US subscription rate (surface post) will be \$8.00, or \$10.00 for airmail. We regret the steepness of the rise, but hope our American readers have appreciated the bargain they have had over the last seven years.

At the same time we must also make a small increase on our UK and European rates. See right for full details.

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This issue of *Magonia* is the 75th issue in the sequence of *Magonia* and *MUFOB* [Ignore what it said on the front of the last issue; that was just to see if anyone was checking, Ed.J.]

Ufology's golden days are over. The demise of the spirit duplicator has led to the interment of the often eccentric, sometimes brilliant, local UFO journals; *FSR* is no more than a shade, devoid of life and hope and intellect and gibbering in the outer darkness, suggestions for its replacement are met with indifference or even hostility (apparently one had to have the written approval of Britain's UFO prominentori before such a thing could even be discussed). Today serious ufology is represented by *UFO Brigantia*, *BUFORA Bulletin*, and *Northern UFO News*, which even combined have a smaller circulation than the remains of *FSR*.

Some of the intellectual excitement is missing. The heady days of the nineteen sixties and seventies, when new discoveries were 'round the corner', are over, as are the great CE-III and CE-IV cases. With our jaundiced eye, though, we wonder if they were ever there!

But all is not lost. The new, critical ufology of Andy Roberts, Maurizio Verga, Claude Mauge, etc., is an excellent sign. It is significant that much of the best critical work is being done in France, where all attempts to set up a hegemonic UFO society have failed, and where a new generation is not obliged to sit at the feet of their elders and betters.

Contrast this with the pathetic state of American ufology, where the dinosaurian, monolithic, and complacent MUFON has a near-monopoly. Where is the new American generation of radical, critical ufologists who will stir things up? With a few brave exceptions, almost all have departed the field.

PETER ROGERSON

NORTHERN ECHOES

Besides forty years of UFOs and 75 issues of this magazine, I am celebrating another landmark - the 25th anniversary of my own interest in ufology. When I was a schoolboy I wanted to be a ufologist when I grew up; but I feared that it would all be solved by then - the Martians would have landed in Hyde Park...

How the memories flood back... the famous BUFORA conference in Manchester when Norman Oliver lectured on sex and saucers, and Tony Wedd showed slides of trees ('Number one, the larch, The Larch')... the first appearance in the pages of the *Daily Mirror* of the 'Warminster Thing'... the wild days of 1967, the extraordinary case of the contactee, the telephone box and the moon-stone, for which the world is not yet ready... John Rimmer's face on being told that John Harney had been silenced by the M.I.B...

Through nineteen years and 75 issues, *MUFOB* and *Magonia* have ploughed on. Hated in the early days as cynical Northerners "blind to reality", fêted in the mid-seventies, and latterly cast half as elder statesmen half as villains. Our critics have never been able to pin us down: are we wicked materialists doubting "the great truths forming in the void" (or underground, as the case may be), or vapid mystics unable to face the gritty hard reality of nuts and bolts, and engaged in futile fairy-hunts? Answers, on a postcard please, to...

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WHY CRACOE FELL

DAVID CLARKE

**reveals the extraordinary story of the
Cracoe UFO photographs, which begins
on a remote hillside in Yorkshire,
and ends in furious claims,
counterclaims, verbal abuse and physical
violence.**

I am writing this account as an observer independent of both the main protagonists involved in the birth and demise of the Cracoe, North Yorkshire, UFO case. As a BUFORA investigator in the Yorkshire area I have watched the presentation and propagation of this case by its proponents, the Yorkshire UFO Society, and the counter-investigation by the West Yorkshire UFO Research Group. The sequence of events between 1981 and 1987 is so complex that the following can only serve as a summary of the situation, but I believe it covers all the relevant details. In writing this account I have used relevant documentation from WYUFORG's case file, and from YUFOS's published case reports, and from their respective magazines, *UFO Brigantia* and *Quest*.

The Pennine hills of Northern England have experienced many waves of UFO activity. At least every year since 1973 reports of brilliant lights and glowing disc-shaped objects have emanated from the hills and moorland between the Rossendale Valley in Lancashire, the Yorkshire Dales and the High Peak of north Derbyshire. Two major UFO investigation groups have been active in this area -- the Yorkshire UFO Society (YUFOS), founded in 1981 by two investigators from Contact UK, Graham and Mark Birdsall; and the West Yorkshire UFO Research Group (WYUFORG), founded in 1983 by Nigel Mortimer, a BUFORA investigator.

It was YUFOS who originally investigated the Cracoe sighting in 1981 and who subsequently released a report (the 'Cracoe File') giving details of the photo-analysis conducted into the series of six photographs taken by witnesses at the time. According to Mark Birdsall in his report ('Cracoe: The Evidence'), published late in 1986: '...the [Cracoe] incident is one of the most conclusive pieces of evidence regarding the UFO phenomenon ever acquired in the UK'. On Monday 16 March 1981, a layer

of thick cloud covered the Yorkshire Dales at 2000 feet altitude. Although the weather was cool and free from precipitation, it had been raining moderately during the past week, and snow had been noted 24 hours previously. A slight 9-knot wind was blowing, and occasionally the sun broke through the cloud cover for minutes at a time.

Cracoe village is situated a few miles north of the market town of Skipton, surrounded by the fells and valleys of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. 'Cracoe Fell' is the name given locally to only one part of a large rock outcrop designated as Rylestone Fell on Ordnance Survey maps, which runs north-south at a height of 1600 feet above sea level.

The surrounding area has experienced a lot of UFO activity since the late 1970s, numerous police officers being among those reporting incidents, especially around Carleton and Elslack Moors, to the south of Skipton.

At approximately 1055 on the morning in question the wife of a police officer living in a police house in Cracoe village opposite

the fell looked out of the kitchen window and was astonished to see a series of brilliant lights. They were positioned against the fell, overlooking Cracoe village (Cracoe Fell), to the south-east. She immediately called her husband, and they both watched the brilliant lights for a while before calling another off-duty police officer. These three witnesses described seeing 'up to five distinct white-coloured orbs' situated 50 feet below the fell summit.

They noted that the central light of the formation seemed to be the brightest, as well as a separate 'blob' of light to the left of the formation. Through binoculars one of the officers described seeing a 'triangular-shaped fin' behind the central light, as well as a 'long tube-shape of white light'. The whole barrage of lights, said to be so bright that 'on occasions [he] had to turn his eyes away' was estimated to be 40 feet in diameter. A 'distinct haze' was noticeable between the lights. At 1115 the officers telephoned police-sergeant Tony Dodd at Grassington, who at the time was a local UFO investigator, although

he did not arrive on the scene until after the lights had disappeared.

By 1130 the observers were convinced that a UFO was hovering in the air beside the fell, and the officers then proceeded to take six 35 mm colour photographs of the lights through the open window, one of the shots (the fifth) using a zoom lens. These photographs constitute the main evidence from which the Cracoe controversy has arisen.

During the observation (which lasted one hour) two jets passed over the fell, once at 1125 and again at 1205 after the lights had disappeared, this time passing low over the spot where they had been. These jets were part of a NATO exercise (in which helicopters were not involved) taking place that morning. However, the relevant authorities deny that they had anything to do with the lights.

Another witness saw the lights along with the police. He was Mr D. Carlisle, a Cracoe farmer. Although the police witnesses were convinced that what they saw could not be explained as a natural phenomenon, Carlisle dismissed the lights as 'sunlight reflections' caused by the sun breaking through the clouds on dull days, and reflecting off the damp millstone grit.

At this stage it would be helpful to give the statements made by the three primary witnesses. The first is the statement by PC Derek Ingham, made on 21 March 1981:

'On Monday, March 16th 1981, I was in the kitchen of my house when I saw three bright lights on the rock face, I looked at the lights with my binoculars but was unable to get a clear view, as if I was looking straight at car headlights. The lights were in a line, but there appeared to be a smaller light just to the side of the main light source, I saw a shape at the back of the lights but was unable to make it out. Sometime around 11.30 am two Royal Air Force jets flew over the area, first one then another, flying very slowly. There is no water on the rock face to give a reflection, and to the best of my knowledge no metallic deposits. At around 11.55 am the lights dimmed and became bright on several occasions, before disappearing. I have observed the fell every day at the same time, the light source has not reappeared, I have also spoken to several village residents who state that they have no knowledge as to what could have caused the lights,

Second is the statement of PC Steve Guest, made on 28 March 1981:

'Please see account (above) which I totally agree with, I remained in the house during the entire incident until the lights disappeared, I am a keen amateur photographer and took the pictures between 11.15 am and 11.40 am. The lights appeared just below the top of the fell, they were hovering. The array of lights varied in intensity and after one hour they vanished. There was no concrete shape yet the colour was the same as magnesium lights, they were brilliant, I found the lights unusual because on the fell (which is very steep) there is nothing to stand the lights on. The terrain makes it impossible to duplicate such an effect.'

Finally the statement given to WYUFORG by the farmer D. Carlisle on 28 September 1986. His testimony is crucial to the interpretation and explanation of this sighting, but even though he is mentioned in the police report and in a local newspaper story of 1983, YUFOS have stated in 1986 that they 'rule out the farmer as a vital witness': it must be noted that between 1981 and 1986, the time when YUFOS investigated and promoted this case, not once did they mention anywhere in their magazine, case report or public lectures that a witness existed who believed the lights to have a mundane explanation.

Not once did YUFOS mention that a witness existed who believed the lights to have a mundane explanation.

'I was present outside Cracoe Police Station on the 16th March, 1981, I observed the lights for not more than 15 minutes. The lights were on Rylestone Fell (note correct term for Cracoe Fell), People present were Tony Dodd (a police sergeant), D. Ingham (policeman). The weather conditions were overcast with outbreaks of sun. The lights observed were as portrayed in the photographs and in that location, I have seen these lights both before and after on many occasions, as have my wife and son. The lights appear when the rocks are wet, and the sun shines on the wet surfaces. It does not occur on bright sunny days, only on cloudy days with outbreaks of sun. My attitude towards the UFO phenomenon is one of an open mind and in my opinion the lights I saw were nothing else other than the sun shining on the rocks. On the day in question the lights were brighter than I have seen before, I did not notice any structure whatsoever behind the lights.'

THE YUFOS INVESTIGATION

Although articles relating to the Cracoe case, and naming the witnesses, had appeared in the *Craven Herald* (the local paper) following the sightings in 1981, YUFOS did not go public with the case until the summer of 1983, and by this time the police officers involved had requested

total anonymity (they hoped the case would go no further). YUFOS had the six photographs developed by a 'police contact' in Hull. He concluded that they showed a 'series of bright lights' against the fell, 'far brighter than the fell and surrounding areas'. Two slides and a negative were then sent for analysis by an expert at Leeds University, who suggested that the policemen were looking at a physical object which was 'tilted back towards the fell face...at an angle of 30 degrees' and that the 'blobs of light were on the underside of the object. Slides were sent to contacts in London where the image was enlarged 80 times. Here it was said that the 'fin' could be picked out behind the lights. However, nowhere in YUFOS's reports is documentary evidence given to back the above conclusions. By 1982-3 YUFOS had decided to send the photographs to independent analysts in America and West Germany, and at the same time work in the Cracoe area was carried out by members of YUFOS's field investigation team, led by Philip Mantle.

YUFOS investigators placed markers on the fell and on instructions from observers in Cracoe village plotted the exact location

of the 'lights'. The team also ruled out the possibility that the lights could have been man-made (i.e. markers for the NATO exercise) due to the inaccessibility of the steep rock face and the fact that the police observed no one.

In a trip up the adjoining section of the fell in June 1981, Philip Mantle and his team discovered 'hundreds of dead trees...it looked like a mini version of the Tunguska fireball event'. YUFOS stated that samples of this damage analysed at Leeds University 'were found to have been burnt by a severe heat source placed quite close for only a few minutes...not consistent to a lightning strike or a normal fire'. No documents are given to back up these claims, and the evidence now at hand indicates that the damage could just as easily have been caused by a forest fire. In their 1986 report YUFOS admit this is the probable explanation for the tree damage. Nevertheless, this damage has been associated with the Cracoe Fell sighting during public lectures given by YUFOS. [Including the one given to the 1986 Anglo-French UFO Symposium

at Hove, attended by *Magonia* editors - JRJ

By 1983-4 YUFOS had received the results of the analysis carried out by Ground Saucer Watch (GSW) of Arizona, and by the independent West German researcher Klaus Webner into the Cracoe photographs. Although YUFOS have claimed that in particular GSW's computer techniques lend support to the UFO designation of this case, the facts clearly show that both of these analysts conclude that the photographs do not show a solid object and that the light was probably caused by some kind of light reflection.

Both of these analysts conclude that the photographs do not show a solid object

GSW state: 'the shape is both irregular and non-symmetrical' and that there is 'no photographic evidence that the image is structured...computerised data suggests that the AI is tenuous in nature and is either light producing or light reflecting'. They conclude that 'there is no evidence that the AIs are "objects" hovering between the witness and the distant hills', and that explanations of 'natural landscape, i.e. limestone rock formations or water reflecting sunlight are plausible...the densitometer readings reveal that the AI is not as bright as the sky, but is contrasted due to the surrounding darker area'. Although computer scans failed to pick out other areas of rock/sunlight reflection on other parts of the rock face, they did find areas of residual snow, which could possibly have reflected sunlight.

Webner's analysis, based mainly on distance factoring, says:

I have found no movement of the light spots, so they must have had a stationary source' (consistent with a reflection)... 'I have found no evidence that there was anything in the air between the Cracoe Fell and the eyewitnesses...I have found no evidence for a flying or flyable object...no shot shows the appearance and/or disappearance.

In the original 'Cracoe File' (1985) Mark Birdsall writes that 'it is quite obvious these results relate very closely to the original analysis offered by GSW, the original police report and the resulting investigation by Tony Dodd'. This statement does not stand up to scrutiny, for the original police report implies that something solid was present and Webner's (as well as that by GSW to an extent) does not. None

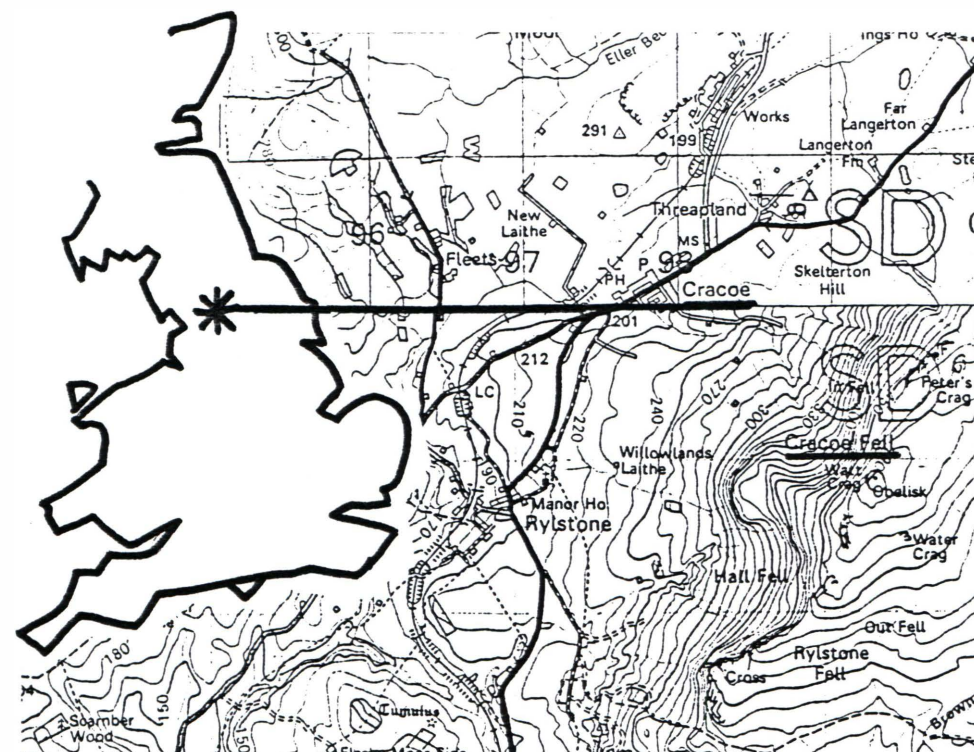
of the analysts picked out a fin or any structure of any kind behind the lights.

The GSW analysis is described as 'sparse' in the 'Cracoe File', and as regards Webner: 'using all [his] figures, opinions and comments, we [YUFOS] feel nothing is based on proper scientific analysis.' !!

One of the reasons for the confusion above is the fact that many of the data supplied by YUFOS to the photo-analysts were inaccurate and misleading. Many of the estimations given, e.g. the distance between the obser-

analysis is the initial statement by the witnesses that the lights attracted their attention due to their 'dazzling' brilliance. GSW conclude that the 'AI is not as bright as the sky...the photograph does not support "three very intense white lights"'. GSW's discovery that 'evidence of snow is obvious' on other sections of the fell face also contradicts the statement of the YUFOS investigators that no snow or ice was visible on the fell (however, YUFOS add in 1986 that "there was of course the possibility that small snow particles had formed in the cracks of the fell face")

The case reports released by YUFOS are riddled with similar errors of omission and commission. Both distances and directions given are very vague (no grid reference is given in the original file, and the one given in the 1986 report is inaccurate -- the correct map reference, approximated by WYUFORMG, is GR 965579, Sheet SD 85/95), so that a person unfamiliar with the Cracoe area would not be able to find the place mentioned without difficulty. YUFOS state over again that the phenomenon was observed on 'limestone rock' when in fact it occurred on quartz-bearing gritstone crags. All the rocks of the area are basically limestone but layers of rock at the top of the fells are composed of resistant caps of millstone grit. This rock glistens when wet (it had been raining several days previous to the sighting), and is known to retain moisture for lengthy periods.



Despite all these inconsistencies YUFOS conclude "there is certainly a great deal of evidence both scientific and circumstantial which supports the UFO theory...YUFOS feel that information...at least partly supports the structured image theory". Clearly these statements are nonsense. None of the independent scientific analyses found any 'structure' behind the lights or any evidence that the lights were three-dimensional.

Nevertheless, in the summer of 1983 the story was carried in the local and national press as confirmed evidence of UFOs in the Yorkshire Dales. At one point YUFOS were offered £600 by the *Mail on Sunday* to admit that the photographs showed 'aliens from space'. Although YUFOS admit that they 'didn't disagree with this', to their credit they refused the offer.

During the burst of publicity surrounding the photographs, those who had been perhaps convinced by YUFOS's statements might have missed a small item which appeared in the Skipton newspaper the *Craven Herald* on 2 September 1983. This was a report on the beliefs of the Cracoe farmer D. Carlisle:

'Reports that a shiny object on Cracoe Fell was conclusive proof of alien visitors to the earth have been dismissed as "rubbish" by a local farmer, Mr D. Carlisle said the phenomenon often occurred on dull days when the sun caught rocks on the fell. "It's quite spectacular, but that's all there is to it", he explained.'

Although YUFOS had not mentioned this item in their reports of the case prior to 1986, it was obtained by Nigel Mortimer, of WYUFORMG, through the usual press-cutting channels shortly afterwards. He decided to look into the sighting on behalf of BUFORA, WYUFORMG and NUFON, and contacted Mr Carlisle for his story. The farmer confirmed his belief that the lights were a reflection, and his story has never changed from this interpretation.

Nigel also visited Cracoe Fell, and saw unusual shimmering light reflections from the glistening rocks of the fell face caused by the lights of Threshfield Quarry opposite. He soon ruled out these as the explanation (they were never turned on during the day), although it did show that unusual reflections could be obtained in the area. However, in 1986 Mark Birdsall maintains that YUFOS investigators had visited the fell more than 90 times and over 600 slides had been taken

but 'no unusual light reflections of any kind were observed even in bright sunlight'. Nigel Mortimer retired from UFO research soon after his findings in 1983 (reported briefly in *Northern UFO News* No. 104), and did not return to investigate the case until 1986.

Throughout the period 1983-86, YUFOS lectured widely, claiming the photographs showed a 'UFO' and using them to boost their status within ufology and their claims to be 'Britain's leading UFO publication'.

1986 — THE CRACOE PHOTOGRAPHS RE-EVALUATED

In March 1986 Andy Roberts, editor of WYUFORMG's journal *UFO Brigantia*, was asked by Paul Devereux to write a piece for the 'Earthlights' back-cover spot in the *Ley Hunter*, on the Cracoe case. Andy replied that he would obtain all the relevant data on the case (including YUFOS's Cracoe file and Nigel Mortimer's data) and if the evidence indicated that 'earthlights' were a probable solution to the case, would write the article.

Andy wrote to YUFOS enclosing £5 for their Cracoe file advertised in *Quest* (YUFOS's journal) as on sale to anyone interested. The request was denied as 'you would not agree with YUFOS's conclusions'. YUFOS later explained this claiming that as they were the investigating body only they were qualified to make any written comment on the facts of the case!

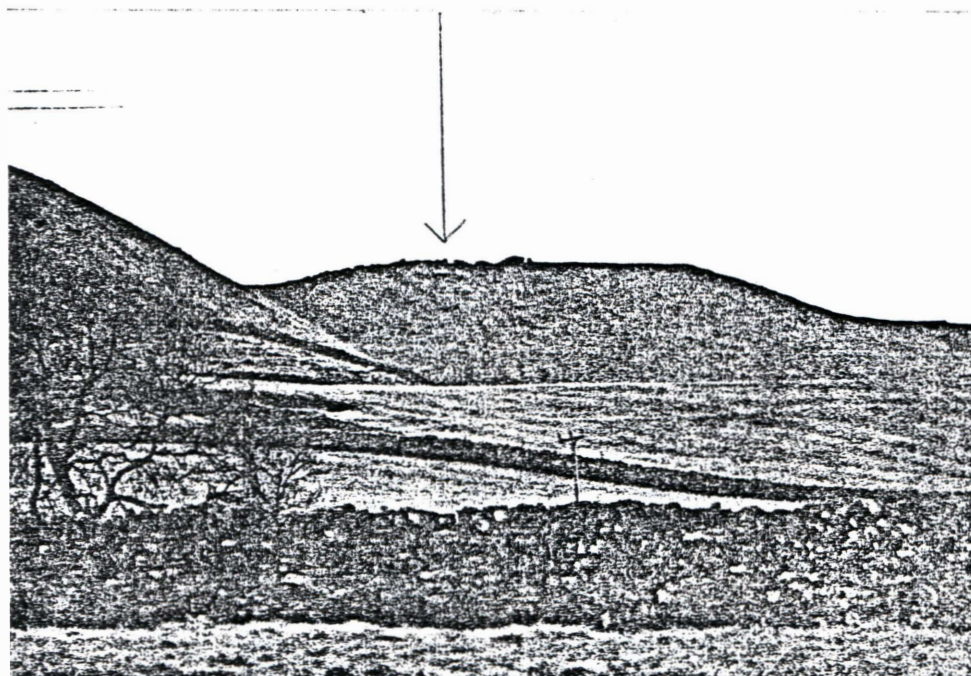
Nigel Mortimer had now returned to active ufology and announced his intention of following up his original line of enquiry into the Cracoe case, asking for support from WYUFORMG, which was granted. In the June 1986 edition of *UFO Brigantia*, he gave his version of events and questioned YUFOS's attitude towards other UFO groups, including the refusal of documents and liaison. He asked why Mr Carlisle's belief that reflections were the cause of the phenomenon had been ignored by YUFOS; described his own observations of light reflections in the Cracoe area, and also questioned YUFOS's statement that it took 'three hours' of hard walking to reach the fell summit. According to Nigel the fell can be reached by 'a pleasant half-hour stroll from the roadside. The exact area, give or take a few feet, is quite approachable by anyone who is not frightened of heights! This has been proved by members of WYUFORMG on at least three occasions.'

YUFOS were not aware of Nigel Mortimer's article until a review of it appeared in Jenny Randles' magazine *Northern UFO News*, whereupon Philip Mantle wrote for a copy. By this time (August-September 1986), having failed to obtain the Cracoe file from YUFOS openly, Nigel Mortimer asked a relative in Doncaster to write to YUFOS for it, alleging a UFO sighting on the fell as a reason for her interest. A copy was sent to her immediately. Although YUFOS regard this action as evidence of WYUFORMG's 'total deceit and dishonesty' it is obvious that Nigel would never have had to resort to these means to obtain the report if it had not been denied to him in the first place without good reason.

YUFOS responded to Nigel's actions by adding a cryptic comment at the end of the July-August 1986 issue of *Quest* (printed in September). This read: 'BUFORA in disgrace? YUFOS/QUEST reveals the shameful actions of a BUFORA investigator, and questions the future of this once proud group.' In a heated telephone call on 26 September between Nigel Mortimer and Mark Birdsall (of YUFOS), Birdsall told Mortimer that he had no business writing about a case he had no part investigating, and 'advised' him not to write anything further on the case. Furthermore, in an extraordinary meeting of YUFOS's executive committee on 28 September it was agreed that the group would have nothing further to do with Nigel Mortimer, Jenny Randles, WYUFORMG or BUFORA, whom they regarded as 'not serious researchers'!

By this time (early October) WYUFORMG investigators had decided to return again to Cracoe Fell in differing weather conditions in order to see for themselves the reflection — said by the farmer to be visible at certain times of the year in dull weather — and hopefully obtain photographs of their own. At the same time WYUFORMG editor Andy Roberts engaged in a lengthy postal debate with Philip Mantle (YUFOS's Overseas Liaison Officer) over the Cracoe case. Mantle disagreed, but in a reasonable fashion, with WYUFORMG's conclusions and said that the next issue of *Quest* would 'leave you and your colleagues in no doubt that the Cracoe photographs do not depict light reflections'.

In early October Nigel Mortimer and Martin Dagless received a number of anonymous letters, postmarked from Leeds, showing a picture of an ostrich with its head planted in the ground and a



caption reading 'WYUFORG -- Nigel Mortimer'. Another anonymous letter consisted of a plain piece of paper merely containing the words 'GO SEE YOUR DOCTOR!!!'. Other letters were received from YUFOS investigators alleging incompetence in WYUFORG's investigation and calling them 'a disgrace to British ufology'!

By a stroke of luck, Andy Roberts was passing through Cracoe at 1400 on 11 November 1986 and, looking at the fell, saw 'a bright white strip with a smaller white "blob" at the side [standing] out...from the surface of the rock'. This was obviously the much-vaunted 'Cracoe UFO', and although he did not have his camera with him at the time two other witnesses saw the same reflection.

On 15 November Andy returned to the base of the fell with his camera and a zoom lens. Again, the phenomenon appeared on the face of the fell, possibly brighter on this occasion. Ten photographs of the effect were taken from within yards of the spot where the original photographs had been taken in 1981. When these new photographs were developed, and the resultant image enlarged to 16" x 12" (the same size as the YUFOS photographs the true nature of the Cracoe 'UFO' was apparent. The two images -- from 1981 and 1986 -- were the same. Both were of the same dimensions and positioned similarly on the face of the fell. The only difference between the two is that the YUFOS photographs of the reflection are much brighter than those taken by WYUFORG. This is hardly surprising considering the

number of meteorological conditions which need to be met to produce the 'dazzling' effects reported in 1981.

WYUFORG informed Philip Mantle of their new evidence, and Mantle agreed to come along and see the photographs for himself. WYUFORG also sent one of their slides to Klaus Webner. Webner replied on 4 December 1986, stating:

'The Cracoe "UFO" photo case is unmasked. Your slide does show the same phenomenon under controlled conditions! The intensity of the light is not so bright as it is to see on the Cracoe photos but the position of the reflection is absolutely the same! Your slide is evidence that a harmless reflection on this sloping area of rock is responsible for the huge UFO headlines in the newspapers. [It is] self-evident the images on the Cracoe fell photos [were] the results of reflections and self-evident the statement of the farmer is important. In my opinion the whole Cracoe Fell case is nonsense! YUFOS had published it in newspapers as a "UFO case" and now they have not the courage to say that in reality nothing has happened in 1981.'

WYUFORG did not visit the fell again until 26 December 1986, when the reflection was visible. Andy Roberts took a further 36 photographs. Two days later Martin Dagless saw the effect for the first time from Cracoe village. These new photographs show quite clearly that the phenomenon is caused, partially at least, by sunlight as the image faded and came back into view several times as the weather conditions changed. On 28 December the fell was climbed by Roberts and Dagless and, despite a strong wind and a

shroud of mist, the exact area producing the light reflections was found. This is Andy's account of their discovery:

'At close quarters the piece of rock responsible for the anomalous effect bears no visual relation to what is seen and photographed at a distance. The effect is caused by light (not direct sunlight) reflecting off a piece of gritstone rock which is at an approximate angle of 25 degrees. The surface of the rock is worn smooth, unlike the surrounding gritstone, and is a drainage surface for the peat bog which adjoins it. Furthermore, the surface of the rock was partially covered with an unknown species of white lichen. To one side of this piece of rock a larger piece of upright gritstone stands, next to which was a smaller angled rock with the same surface features. The dimensions of the larger area were 15' x 10' and the smaller area 2' x 2'. When viewed from a distance this gives the effect of an incandescent white strip of light with a smaller "blob" to one side.'

Despite being informed of these facts Mark Birdsall, in a letter of 6 January 1987, states:

'...this section of the fell has come under the microscope of the Research Division and some eleven investigators. All I can add is that the photographic material in the possession of YUFOS appears to negate this elongated rock as the culprit. Whichever way one interprets the case, we have nothing more than three spherical orbs of light in front of this rock. Indeed one of the photographs (never released) depicts a red-orange sphere in front of one of these white-coloured spheres. A shadow is most certainly visible on the underside of the orange sphere. As a very objective research group, we would certainly put forward any possible potential for the case (if one was forthcoming)...after considering all the data we feel there is a great potential for this section of rock being backhighlighted from these spheres.'

In effect, he is saying that on the morning of 16 March 1981, a real 'UFO' decided to land on, or hover in front of, the exact position of the fell which produces a natural light reflection! Clearly this is nonsense. The colouring observed on the photograph can just as easily be explained by the white light being broken into a spectrum by the weather conditions. The GSW analysis did state that 'digital densitometry reveals that there are three major areas of higher density, within the larger AI and to the unaided eyes these appear as near-rounded "objects"'. However, by late December YUFOS had gone into print in their September-October issue of *Quest* attacking and abusing WYUFORG, Nigel Mortimer, Jenny Randles and

BUFORA for their 'scandalous actions'. For thirteen pages of the magazine Mark Birdsall launched into a tirade of spurious and fabricated 'facts', saying for example that WYUFORG had 'openly accused' YUFOS and the police witnesses of having lied about the case. It must be said that there is little in the issue dealing with the actual case itself, and although Philip Mantle had informed WYUFORG that the article would 'leave you and your colleagues in no doubt that the Cracoe photographs do not depict light reflections', no new evidence was presented to prove their case.

Furthermore, YUFOS announced the publication of a new report on the Cracoe case, written entirely by Mark Birdsall, entitled, 'Cracoe: The Evidence'. Although WYUFORG again requested a copy of this report they have been informed by YUFOS that 'to allow reports which are for the benefit of serious researchers to be sent to your group at this time will conflict with our current attitude towards your group'.

The report is 200 pages long, and is being sold at £7.50. This 'new' report says very little more than what has already appeared in *Quest* (1985), and in the original 'Cracoe File' (which, although it has been sold for several years by YUFOS, is admitted by Mark Birdsall in a letter to be 'very brief...poorly written...masses of connecting data and relevant information were omitted'.

Mark Birdsall states in the introduction to the new report that it has been written to 'negate incredible statements' by other groups, and to 'increase the possibility that a UFO was seen'. Although former Carlisle is mentioned in the new report several mistakes are still apparent -- including the grid reference and the statement that the phenomenon appeared on limestone rocks. The report concludes that 'there is evidence that a UFO was seen on the fell' and that the explanation of sunlight reflecting off ice or snow residue was unlikely due to the moving cloud cover, the fact that the sun was not shining directly on the fell and the orientation of the fell itself. In reality the sun on the morning in question was shining obliquely onto the rock face and moderate rainfall had occurred on the days before the event.

Although the official YUFOS stance is still that the case is 'unexplained' (and they have

'excommunicated' members of WYUFORG, even to the extent of 'banning' them from their public conferences!) the team leader on the ground research into this case, Philip Mantle, has now admitted in writing -- after seeing the photographic evidence in *UFO Brigantia* -- that the case is solved.

Sadly, the co-ordinators and executive committee of YUFOS have proved themselves unable to discuss this case in a reasonable fashion and still refuse to admit that the new evidence at hand explains the original sighting. In 'Cracoe: The Evidence' Mark Birdsall is still using Klaus Webner's photographic analysis to support the UFO status of the case, which Webner now believes to be explained.

Throughout this whole affair I have watched as an independent observer as WYUFORG presented their evidence in a decent and orderly manner. YUFOS have never answered properly any of the very reasonable questions put to them in relation to this case without resorting to personal attacks upon the character of the questioners. A meeting I attended as an observer between YUFOS and WYUFORG ended in chaos when Graham Birdsall, president of YUFOS, turned up uninvited and threatened physical violence towards Martin Dagless and Andy Roberts, having to be restrained from carrying out his threats by his brother. A full account of this disgusting incident can be read in *UFO Brigantia* No. 24 (January-February 1987) and a full statement from myself is available regarding the scene I witnessed.

CONCLUSION

As the case stands in February 1987, it is now explained and should no longer be classified as a 'UFO'. Nigel Mortimer, Andy Roberts and Martin Dagless of WYUFORG should be congratulated for exposing the truth about

this case, and not attacked for it. The events of 1986-7 raise many important questions which still need to be answered before the case can finally be 'closed'. But I do not want to say any more here as I believe I have presented enough evidence for unbiased readers to make up their own minds.

I would like to make it plain, as would the members of WYUFORG, that no one is questioning the integrity of the original witnesses in 1981, or any of the facts in their statements. They admittedly firmly believed that what they observed was a UFO -- but many thousands of witnesses have just as firmly believed that other natural phenomena had an exotic origin.

In the Cracoe case, however, human perception is merely a side issue, and what WYUFORG have been contesting is the photographic evidence which has now undeniably been explained by a combination of unusual natural factors at this particular location.

The case, although now explained, is only one of innumerable cases reported from the Pennine area in recent years. I do not believe that the demise of this case proves that nothing unusual is happening in the skies over the area (even Mr Carlisle believes UFOs are regular visitors to the Craven hills), it merely shows how wary ufologists must be before accepting on face value 'classic' UFO cases. All serious researchers must be vigilant and willing to accept a solution to a case when one is forthcoming. If not then the UFO evidence becomes a jumble of useless data which merely adds to the myth and can prove nothing.

WYUFORG (and I, for that matter) will be happy to answer any questions arising from this controversy, and copies of all relevant data will be supplied to anyone on request.

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PETER ROGERSON
again examines the folklore of 'BOLS',
and finds some remarkable connections
with UFOs, poltergeists and witchcraft



In the Rio Grand area of the United States, LITs are well known amongst both whites and Indians as signs of high flying witches. As Pulitzer Prize winning Indian novelist N. Scott Momaday wrote in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* of 24th September 1972:

"There are witches at Lémy Pueblo, and when I lived there I knew them sure enough. One night I saw some curious lights away in the distance, small points of light moving erratically about at ground level, and I was told they were witch lights. I thought nonsense, there are some boys running about with flashlights, that is all. And then one of the lights rose slowly and moved like a shooting star across the whole expanse of the sky. I shudder to think of it"

The community believed that witches could fly disguised as gourds, eggs, pumpkins and especially fireballs. People could be abducted by witches, teleported to distant locations. The Cochite describe such fireballs as measuring six to twelve inches in diameter, and consisting of a black centre with a surrounding surface of fiery red flames. Other pueblos believed similar things.

Strange tales are told of these lights - two men travelling the road to Chama late one December night saw at about 1 o'clock in the morning a phantasmal light in the distance. At first they thought it might be a campfire of wood gatherers, but on drawing close they saw it change shape and make unearthly motions. Finally it soared upwards and shot across the horizon to the town of San Luis. When the men went to a nearby

house to enquire about the strange phenomenon, the farmer claimed he was bewitched and the fireball was his tormentor.

Nicolo Marina of San Mateo saw a fireball descending into an arroyo and on going to investigate he discovered it had changed into a huge rat. As he chased it through tall grass it suddenly changed into a dog, gave a savage growl and disappeared among the willows.

Men named Juan were noted as witchfinders and capturers. An excellent way to capture witches was to draw a circle on the ground. One such man was Juan Chavez of Torré, who lived in the 1890's. One day, riding from Torré to visit a friend in Casa Colorado, down an isolated stretch of road he perceived a large ball of fire leaping over the countryside in great bounds. Realising it was a transformed

witch he dismounted and drew a circle on the road. The flaming object then flew into the circle and vanished. Juan carried on with his journey. Returning along the same route the next day he found an old woman named Chata, a suspected witch, sitting on the road unable to move unless he held her hand.

The bewitchment that these fiery witches brought was the supernatural attack. A modern case of this sort occurred in 1966 at the Alfaneo Quintana home in El Llan, south of Taos. A barrage of rocks pelted the house during the late night hours, and some witnesses saw weird luminosities. The wife of a local J.P., Mrs Mascarenas described fireballs "about the size of a golfball, a strange blue gray colour, not at all like a flashlight". They bounded along higher than a man's head, and disappeared into the trees further down the Santa Barbara road. No footprints were found, and bullets fired into the darkness had no effect.¹

There are a number of stories connecting strange assaults and ghost-lights in the literature.

In July 1962 a series of strange flashes like neon tubes, which were seen whether the blinds were drawn or not, plagued the Howell home in Clayton, North Carolina. They were read or yellow, about the brilliance of a 200 watt bulb. Parapsychologist William Roll who investigated saw "three clear but not blinding flashes of light". No prowler was found, and it appeared that the lights originated from inside the house.²

During the period October 9-14, 1966, poltergeist disturbances, including phantom stone-throwers, furniture overturning and increases in air pressure were reported from the Szlanfucht house in Osceola, St Joseph's County, Indiana. At the same time strange lights were seen in the sky in the area.³

In March of the same year similar disturbances were reported at the Reeves home near Toledo, Oregon. The story began when 15-year-old Kathy Reeves and a friend were walking up Pioneer Road and saw a ruddy glow in the distance. As they got closer they saw it was "smoke boiling all around, making a dome shape as high as a room". No fire was found in the field, however.

From then on the family was plagued with 'crawling lights'. At one time someone fired at something outside, which retreated,

then the inside of the house suddenly sparkled with a multitude of crawling lights. Mrs Reeves woke up at two in the morning to see "my whole bedroom ... a rosy glow so bright you could read a newspaper in it ... I happened to turn towards the door leading into the living room and I saw this thing like a cloud just hanging there. It was water-melon coloured and you could see through it ... It was just a kind of hazy mass for a couple of seconds, and then it disappeared."

A chemist friend, Max Taylor, camped out and saw two pulsating spots of light on opposite ends of the house, like a beam of light seen at the extremes. Presumably on the same night a deputy saw an orange light man-overing, which disappeared after ninety seconds with a high-pitched whine. Strange walking stumps were also seen and marks found in fields. Others saw peculiar objects in the sky.⁴

The Gould farm at South Middleton (Mass.) was, in 1977/78 the scene of a complex series of events, including a landed UFO which left physical traces, a small helmeted being which appeared and disappeared, a faceless prowler, a vague case of cattle mutilation, and poltergeist disturbances in 1977/78.⁵

At Lowell, Michigan, three men of 'dubious repute' became paranoid over 'kids' in camouflage suits who had the unnerving habit of running on all fours. Gradually they became convinced that 'they' were climbing into their house, and fired at them. The men thought they had killed one of the intruders, but no body was found, and the trio were arrested by the police. At Shelbyville, Michigan, a young couple panicked, believing they were being besieged by prowlers or police, wearing SWAT suits showing green lights. There was also a prowler who broke in, who fled when pursued, and a red light light a lens moving up and down the window of a the house.⁶

There are many other cases which fall into this pattern - an isolated farm in Ohio besieged by two giant 'ape-men' and something like a hazy, box-like light, a light beam, flashes of light in a wood, and a red light flitting among the trees, as well as cases like Hopkinsville, and even the notorious Ripperstone Farm in Wales.

It was not just in the Rio Grande that strange lights were associated with witchcraft. Similar beliefs were held by

several African societies. During his field work amongst the Azande, Evans-Pritchard saw, just once,

"...witchcraft on its paths. About midnight, before retiring, I took a spear and went for my usual nocturnal stroll. I was walking in the garden at the back of my hut, amongst banana trees, when I noticed a bright light passing at the back of my servant's hut towards the homestead of a man called Tupoi. As this seemed worth investigation I followed its passage, until a grass screen obscured the view. I ran quickly through my hut to the other side in order to see where the light was going... but did not regain sight of it. I knew that only one man, a member of my household, had a lamp that bright [but he had not been out or used it"

Evans-Pritchard was told he had seen witchcraft which had caused the death of a man in Tupoi's compound.⁷

and Anglicans.¹⁰ The external and internal wildernesses were threatening the New World garden. The Indians and French were seen less as humans, than as demonic inhabitants of the howling wilderness¹¹ - a wilderness now perceived as "less a force to be mastered in accordance with divine plan than a menacing presence that threatened to encroach on their territories."¹²

The same theme of habitat under siege from the wilderness is obvious. Perhaps the paradigm here is the famous film *Assault on Precinct Thirteen* in which the embattled inhabitants of an isolated urban police station are surrounded by semi-substantial urban terrorists and hoodlums, who remove the bodies of their dead, leaving little physical evidence.

The social, natural and supernatural wilderness is merged into a single vision of external chaos. The 'real life' victims of

The 'real life' victims of such attacks appear to be those in geographical or socially marginal situations: inhabitants of the liminal zone on the physical and psychological frontiers of society

Amongst the Basuto, witches were accused of turning into fireballs in order to harass houses, and the witches appeared as balls of fire amongst the treetops. Men could extinguish them by using the proper medicine.³

What can one make of this apparent connection between LITs, witchcraft and poltergeists? A good clue lies in the cases of 'phantom attackers'. An historical case mentioned by Westrum offers perhaps the best insight. In 1692 in Gloucester, Massachusetts, an Ebenezer Bapson was plagued by "French-men and Indians who were repeatedly shot at for three weeks, defying all attempts to kill or capture them. Westrum comments: "the bold appearance of these phantoms, the general lack of concern about the gunfire, their seeming invulnerability when convincingly hit, and their skulking are all familiar elements in these stories."¹⁶

The context of this story is dramatic. 1692 was the year of Salem, in the period when the security and very survival of New England was at stake. The Puritan experiment was threatened externally by the French and Indian depredations, which meant that no colonial border was safe; and the charter of 1691 enfranchised dissident Quakers

such attacks appear to be those in geographical and/or socially marginal situations: inhabitants of the liminal zone on the physical and psychological frontiers of society, exposing themselves to the wilderness. The besiegers are today's witches and demons, with all their traditional immunity to human weapons. By incorporating the wilderness into themselves they transcend the human condition: as part of the wilderness they are invulnerable to the puny efforts of human technology.

The central treason of witchcraft is the invitation of wilderness into the midst of habitat. It is not surprising that one of the afflicted at Salem reported that her spectral assailants included French-Canadians and Indians, and that the book which directed their diabolic mission was a Catholic devotional text written in French.¹⁰

Witchcraft accusations are generally believed to result from quarrels and tensions within the community; tensions which rupture the bounds of habitat, allowing in wilderness. To the Church, every act of sin or deviance placed the sinner in a liminal state, which made them an opening through which the external demonic forces could invade the community.

So what can the equation $BOLs = Witches$ mean?. In a variety of cultures we have seen that $BOLs$ are equated with the wild spirits of the distant wilderness, far beyond the frontiers of human habitation. They also symbolise the zone of the spiritual: in becoming a fireball the witch has achieved a final transcendence of the human condition.

It might well be that if $BOLs$ are associated with seismic activity or ball-lightning they would be even more appropriate as symbols of the wilderness, both perfectly demonstrating the fragility of human habitat, buffeted by the weather, split and shaken by the trembling earth.

A strict application of the psycho-socio-cultural hypothesis would make us hesitate about awarding any special status to modern 'scientific' theories making them immune from psycho-socio-cultural analysis. Such an analysis would argue that the modern folklore of earthquake lights, fault-lines and so on, contains profound symbolism. Fault-lines are symbolic liminal zones, gaps in reality where energies might enter.

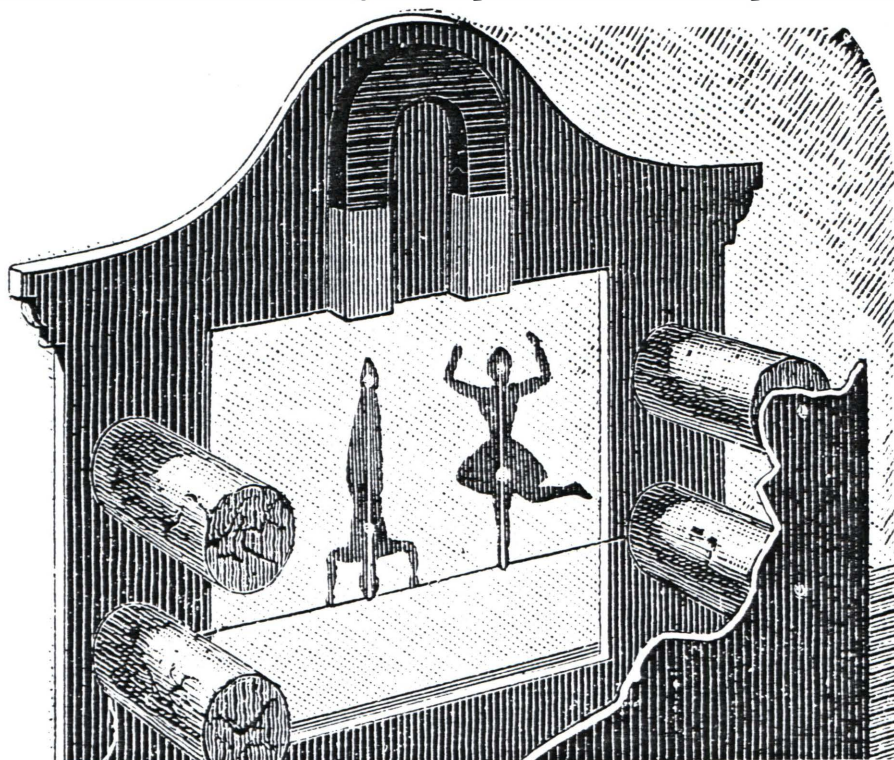
Whether taken as fact or symbol, $BOLs$ as earthquake lights, harbingers of wilderness, can also be interpreted as spirits of transcendence, reminders that reversion to, or coming of the wilderness is not just a degradation.

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PAUL TINMAN

looks at a possible mechanism for a wide range of paranormal experiences



MAGNETISM AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMANS

We are all magnetic fish in a magnetic sea; we move through and partake of constantly changing magnetic currents and breezes which are not only geological in origin, but geophysical, solar and interplanetary as well. Like all creatures on earth, we've evolved for millions of years in this magnetic environment. Our bodies are riddled with magnetically sensitive molecules, tuned to minute changes in this sea, just as fish are tuned to minute changes in currents.

Medicine recognises the crucial importance of some of these - the K^+ and Na^+ ions in the blood, for example, the so-called electrolytes. Minute variations in these can result in bodily functions going dangerously wrong and brain functions being impaired. And it doesn't take much genius to see that such particles (which can be viewed as standing waveforms anyway) may be disturbed by fluctuations in the magnetic climate. Indeed, chemical changes in the blood have been shown to vary under magnetic influence; for example the famous albumin flocculation experiments of Professor Takata. Blood cells, which have a high iron content, can also be made to rotate by application of a magnetic field.

Experimental work showing the sensitivity of living creatures to magnetism has been well documented, from Frank Brown and his fiddler crabs back in the '40s right up to the recent work of

Dr. Barker at Manchester University, showing that humans use geomagnetism for direction finding (seen recently on BBC's *Horizon* programme). Professor Rocard at the Ecole Normale in Paris showed that humans can detect magnetic changes down to the order of 10^{-8} gauss - almost below the recordable limit. You could fill pages with this sort of evidence.

The result of magnetic disturbance can be chemical disruption of brain functions - anything from moodiness and depression to seizures (epilepsy?) or hallucinations. Statistics of suicides and road accidents apparently rise during periods of sunspot activity, which cause geomagnetic disturbances.

I'm saying two things here: first, that magnetic fluctuations are not solely geological in origin; second, that humans are far more sensitive to them than is generally accepted. Animals too,

which vacate an area pretty sharpish when earthquakes are imminent. Devereux mentions the case of Kasper Hauser, the Nuremberg foundling, who could distinguish blindfolded between different metals by passing his hand over them. Like all our faculties, this would be sharpened by use, blunted by neglect, but it would remain latent, whatever, and be more pronounced in some individuals.

So it's not too big a jump to say that magnetic disturbance, through electromagnetic change, might cause certain sensitive individuals the same sort of visions as those caused under different circumstances by LSD or extreme asceticism. Some people, in proximity to magnetic disturbance might have visions of UFOs Virgin Marys or MIBs. There is a well-known psychological mechanism by which such a subject will use a physical object - a ball of light, maybe - as a 'cue', and then the unconscious takes over, projecting its drama onto reality. In this respect the similarity to the hypnotic state seems marked, down to the importance of such a cue or trigger.

Paul Devereux objects that this causes problems if the physical trigger then behaves in a manner inconsistent with the 'vision'. It doesn't, because the subject simply disregards it. The trigger events merely serves to disrupt the consciousness and set the inner drama in motion. Again, such behaviour can be observed in hypnotic subjects. You can even set such dramas in motion post-hypnotically in some subjects, merely on the appearance of a predetermined cue. The subject will thereupon suddenly diverge from reality, perceiving and acting according to a pre-set and totally unconscious script. The subject's memory of what they saw and did during this period will afterwards differ remarkably from that of other witnesses.

So, while having a lot of respect for Paul Devereux's opinions, I don't see that the phenomenon necessarily involves any externalization of the imagery onto ionized plasmas or such. It's easy to accept that idea in the case of simple manifestations like Paul's original 'universal man' vision, but problems arise applying it to the many extremely complicated UFO abduction dramas, with their time-loss and other components.

Of course, the objection will be that many such cases involve multiple witnesses who all share

essentially the same experience. So if the whole thing is just a magnetic barn dance in the brain, how does more than one individual see it?

The answer to that may have something to do with the relationships between the people involved, and with the fact that the same magnetic disturbance will presumably affect them all: they will all be immersed in the same field at the time of the experience. In several of the more complex multi-subject contact/abduction dramas (the Hills, Tujunga Canyon, etc.) it appears that one individual is dominant or seems to be the catalyst for the events experienced. Such individuals are also often in various stages of inner crisis, to which the events can be seen to relate (see John Rimmer's, *The Evidence for Alien Abductions*).

In this regard, it may be fruitful for investigators to ask: a) is hypnotism easier within a magnetic field, and b) are telepathy, telekinesis, etc. easier within a magnetic field? One can think of reasons why this may be so: fluctuations at one point in a field will resonate throughout the field, and mental activity is basically electrical fluctuation, measurable by EEG.

There may be a purely biological function to all this. At the basic level, simply a warning of impending disaster registered by our unconscious magnetic sense and passed to the waking mind via some scary image. At a higher level, a dramatization of personal, cultural or racial problems in which the individual is just a medium. The ways of the brain are strange and complicated, and there won't be a straightforward answer, I'm sure. But maybe we'd do well to look again at the unfashionable ideas of Julian Jaynes in this context. Maybe the old bicameral mind wasn't so daft after all!

None of this pretends to be any sort of Theory. I'm just putting my two-pennorth in, and it all stands up to be knocked down. My main point is that the extent and nature of our susceptibility to geomagnetic influences is greatly underestimated, despite ample evidence, and that proper research in this area will in the future open all sorts of doors on our understanding of ourselves and our world.

One thing I'm sure we'll all agree on - we are more than we think we are!



COMPUTER COLUMN

A rapidly increasing proportion of the journals which we receive in exchange for *Magonia* are obviously produced using personal computers, so this column, the first of what I hope will become a regular feature of *Magonia*, has been introduced with the aim of exchanging useful ideas and information relevant to the production of small-circulation journals and to research into anomalous phenomena, using the computer equipment available to us and to our readers.

John Rimmer has an Amstrad PCW 8512 and I have a PCW 8256. These machines have made the task of producing *Magonia* much easier. It would make it even easier if those contributors who have computers compatible with ours would send us their articles on discs. Files must be in either LocoScript or ASCII format. The Amstrad 464, 664 and 6128 machines are upwards compatible with the PCWs, so discs from these machines may also be sent. Files will be copied and the discs will be returned quickly. Discs should be sent to John Rimmer or to me (address below). At present we have no facilities to read discs in other sizes or formats.

I should particularly like to hear from those who are using their computers for tasks other than word processing, for example data bases and graphics.

Any contributions for this column should be sent to:

JOHN HARNEY,
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BRACKNELL,
Berkshire, RG12 1LN

LETTERS



Dear John Rimmer

If 'ufology' means anything it means the study of UFOs. But there are no UFOs; there are only UFO reports. There could be a science of the study of UFO reports ('ufology' perhaps) but we do not need a new science to study such reports; existing science is adequate.

If ufology cannot exist it can be neither an art nor a science. In any case your comparison with movements in art is misplaced and somewhat ignorant. Art has no place in the solution of a strictly scientific problem.

Post-Modernism is a reactionary, somewhat romantic movement that far from 'rediscovering the meaning of traditional forms' uses them without any meaning or understanding. It is based on a rejection of functionalism, the most advanced basis for style that architecture has ever produced. Consequently Post-Modernism is a backward step taken by those who fear the future and progress (it parallels a social movement that fears science and progress).

If there is a reaction to 'New Ufology' it can only be because the latter has failed to solve the UFO problem. Lacking a solution some may have turned in desperation to the ETH; all the more reason why the alternatives should be examined. One of these is my mirage hypothesis with astronomical bodies figuring prominently as the stimuli. It certainly is testable. However, if it is any consolation, my hypothesis does demand that some UFO reports are the result not only of a real physical stimulus (perhaps a mirage) but of subjective processing by the observers.

This processing must be understood in psychological and/or sociological terms. In fact it is now understood that all perception is conditioned by

internal programming and cannot be totally reliable.

In short I am claiming that the UFO problem is solvable by finding the physical stimulus and showing how the observers perceived it to be a UFO. This is neither new nor old ufology; it's just the 'appliance of science'!

Steuart Campbell, Edinburgh

[Magonia is not the place to initiate a debate on contemporary movements in architecture, but I would ask Mr Campbell just which examples of architectural 'functionalism' he has in mind: the rusting, tile-shedding History faculty at Cambridge University by one of the high-priests of modernism; the social disasters in public housing by neo-brutalist functionalists like the Smithsons; or any of the hundreds of thousands of leaking, flat-roofed buildings, brought in over budget by the acolytes of Mies van der Rohe and the other paragons of 'modernism'?

As for Mr Campbell's assertion that the UFO problem can be solved by 'his' mirage hypothesis, one would be more inclined to accept this claim if one did not know that ten years ago he was asserting with equal vigour that UFOs were ball-lightning; and ten years before that, that they were manifestations of the devil. Editor.]

Dear Sir,

In the light of Steuart Campbell's letter in *Magonia* 25, all of us working on UFO/earthlight research might as well pack it all up now and take up stamp collecting. Campbell has obviously discovered the simple answer that all we deluded people - including the likes of Mr Mills, Dr Robins, Dr Persinger et al - have overlooked: all the sightings are of stars!

I will not answer all of

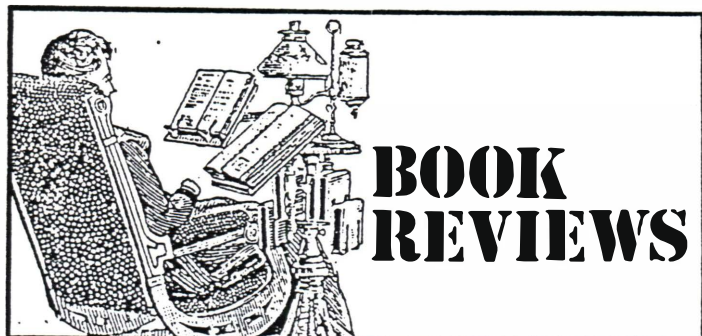
Steuart Campbell's generalisations for fear of initiating an exchange of correspondence like that between himself and Jenny randles in *BUFORA Bulletin* throughout 1986. But I must point out that to regard all observers as mistaken in respect of the lights they observed is wrong and unscientific. For example many of the reports clearly describe lights seen against a background of hills and trees, and some of the witnesses are trained observers with a good knowledge of the night sky. It is stretching credibility to its limits to accept some of Campbell's explanations (like that for the Cash-Landrum case in the USA) at face value.

His sweeping dismissal of other peoples' work, and his refusal to accept anything which disagrees with his 'null hypothesis' clearly demonstrates that he is not open-minded in his approach. His confident statements about the Welsh lights, the Hessdalen phenomena and the Dragon project are based not upon fact but on belief. As he has decided beforehand that all the strange lights are 'astronomical objects', anything which disagrees with this belief has to be flawed or mistaken in some way.

As I have pointed out to Campbell in a letter, it is pointless trying to explain apparition-type phenomena (which is how I tend to regard 'spooklights') by reference to star-maps and astronomy. the two are unconnected.

David Clarke, Sheffield

Letters for publication in Magonia are welcomed, whether in response to articles in the magazine, or on other matters of interest to our readers. See Page 2 for editorial address



DAVIS, J. C. *Fear, Myth and History; the Ranters and the Historians*. Cambridge University Press, 1986, £22.50

If a subject or phenomenon is discussed in the press, is the subject of impassioned denunciation, and centuries later becomes the topic of impressive academic research, it must have existed - mustn't it?

Not so, argues Dr Davis in his study of the alleged seventeenth century pantheistic and antinomian sect (a sort of Cromwellian Doc Sheils, if you get the idea) [No, Ed.] called the Ranters. Under critical examination he Ranters turn out to be, so Davis argues, a folk-devil based on a single tract; Clarksons *Single Eye*. The parallels with many of the topics discussed in *Magonia* are obvious. *Peter Rogerson*

BLACKLEY, S Ramsey. *As in Adam all Die...* Book Guild, 1986, £9.50.

Mr Ramsey, a former chief executive of the Milk Marketing Board, had a cardiac arrest in 1967, but did not have a near-death experience. As a result he decided to examine critically the ideas of spiritualists and various religious groups regarding life after death. Ramsey attacks these with great gusto, recalling the notable atheist pamphleteers of the last century. Many of the doctrines and attitudes assailed would probably be regarded as old fashioned to many members of the faiths concerned.

The treatment of spiritualist accounts of the 'summerland' is hilarious and for those,

like your reviewer, who do not read fundamentalist spiritualist literature, there is a revelation of new levels of gullibility.

The discussion of psychical research and the near-death experience is extremely superficial and quite misleading. The critique of NDE looks suspiciously like sour grapes - "if I've not had a NDE, no-one has".

The reader who wishes to see a scholarly, intelligent and sympathetic critique of the concept of life after death would be advised to try elsewhere. *Peter Rogerson*

DDNG, Paul (Moon Wai), with Wendelle C. Stevens. *UFOs over Modern China; a survey of the phenomenon*. UFO Archive Books, 1983

The bulk of this book consists of abstracts of translated UFO reports, often in the form of letters to the Chinese UFO Research Organisation. The vast majority of the reports are LITS, with the same range of potential explanations as Western reports. Other cases may well describe experimental aircraft, rocket launches, etc. Only one possible abduction story features in the listings. Traces of older beliefs are to be found in reports of UFO sightings coincidental with the flight and death of Lin Biao and the death of Mao.

While the presentation of this material in English is to be welcomed, it is regrettable that it is published of, and in a series containing, some of the most unlikely looking contact stories since Buck Nelson. *Peter Rogerson*

BARROW, John D. and TIPLER, Frank J. *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. Clarendon Press, 1986, £25.00

If the myths of other periods were composed in poetry, those of our culture are increasingly composed in mathematics. This book represents such a mythology of the origin, destiny and purpose of life, the cosmos and everything, as inaccessible to the layperson as any Tridentine Mass or Polynesian Creation Chant.

The Anthropic Principle counters the old Copernican principle of mediocrity. It asserts that only in a cosmos like ours can there be observers. This may be because of the Weak Anthropic Principle: "The observed values of all physical and cosmological quantities are not equally probable, but they take on values restricted by the requirement that there exist sites where carbon-based life can evolve, and by the requirement that the universe be old enough for it to already have done so". Or is it down to the Strong Anthropic Principle: "The universe must have those properties which allow life to develop within it at some stage in its history"? Thus life may be a basic part of the cosmos

Tipler repeats his critique of the absence of ET life, arguing that it is human life which will be the first across the cosmos. On human shoulders stands the Final Anthropic Principle: "Intelligent information processing must come into existence in the universe, and once it comes into existence it will never die out" - in some later stage of its development life will 'colonise' the universe to create a genuine bioverse.

Like all mythologies this has its childish anthropomorphisms. For of trickster spiders and winged angels it substitutes Von Neumann probes and intelligent computers which cannibalise the cosmos like metallic pirana fish. Strange repositories indeed for human values, as human values (or more strictly mammalian values) are the product of our biology and sociology. So the Von Neumann probes are symbols of some unguessable transcendence of the present human condition.

The destiny of humankind, or at least our remote descendants, is to enter the omega point, the final singularity or the collapse of all logical universes, where "life will have gained control of all matter and forces, not only in a single universe, but in all universes where life could logically exist, and will have stored an infinite amount of information including all bits of knowledge that it is logically possible to know ... And this is the end". But would it? When all the infinite possibilities of $1+1=2$ are exhausted, why not the infinite possibilities of $1+1=3$?

It is impossible to know whether such an account is 'true' or not, but the reader of *Magonia* is more likely to be interested in the origins and power of such a myth. In the absence of strong empirical evidence for ET life, I believe that we should take Pascal's gamble on the Anthropic Principle and assert that living human beings (or at most social mammals) are the sole repository of consciousness and meaning in the cosmos. The use of nuclear weapons therefore threatens 'the balance of the universe', indeed in a profound sense its very existence. This is the message that the contactees gave out years ago, to our resounding jeers. What an irony then, that the truth of the contactees message may be contingent on there being no extra-terrestrials at all! *Peter Rogerson*

MACKENZIE, Andrew. *The Seen and the Unseen*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987, £10.95.

Andrew Mackenzie is the enviable position of being just about the only serious regular writer on ghosts and apparitions in this country, if not the English-speaking world. In this, his seventh book devoted to psychical research he devotes special attention to "the sense of

presence" - the feeling that one is sharing ones space with an unseen companion or companions, either benevolent, malevolent or neutral. This is a topic which the author says has been neglected over the past fifty years.

The study of such presences constitutes the first section of the book; the other sections being on haunted houses, apparitions of the

dead and living, collective apparitions, and a miscellany of other strange experiences. A major source of his material is reports sent in by readers of his previous books, as well as cases investigated by the author and others. Often a chapter will revolve around a principle case, which introduces points which are expanded upon by reference to other cases. Mackenzie rejects the idea that cases of apparitions are less frequent than they were; rather he suggests that modern habits such as writing rather than using the telephone make investigation much more difficult.

He generally allows the correspondents to speak for themselves, but wherever possible tries to get confirmation from other persons involved. At times one feels that this may allow certain features of the cases to become obscured, for example, is experiencing a 'hostile presence' the cause or result of family difficulties?

The range of experiences, given the obvious self-selection, is surprisingly broad, and covers many of the motifs we are familiar with in *Magonia*, such as bedroom visitors, and even a couple of phantom bus passengers. Some of the more curious cases include the goblin of Wildenstein Castle in Germany, and the white and black spectres of Graut, which push at the limits of the parapsychologists' categories.

Indeed, if I have a criticism of this book it is that, unlike the author's earlier books, traditional parapsychological interpretations are forced on cases very uneasily. Despite what Mackenzie says there seems very little evidence to connect most apparitions with previous inhabitants of the houses where they occur. Many cases seem to involve a veritable menagerie of apparitions, noises, poltergeist effects, etc. I suspect that people may have a much wider range of anomalous experiences than we normally imagine, only those which can with greater or lesser difficulty be fitted into one of our neat boxes labelled 'psychical', 'UFO', 'religious vision', etc., being reported.

It is often quite arbitrary which particular box an experience is fitted into. The last

case discussed involves a couple going for a picnic. They start the day feeling depressed, get off their bus at the wrong stop, walk round a church, enter a phantom landscape and sit on a phantom bench. Here the woman enters a deeper level of enchantment involving the cutting off of birdsong and extraneous noises, paralysis and coldness. In this state she 'sees' three men through the back of her head. They take flight, appearing halfway back along their journey with no idea of how they got there. This report could clearly have been discussed in terms of a UFO abduction. Mary Rose Barrington, the parapsychologist who investigated the case, thought it was unique - the ufologist knows otherwise!

Mackenzie writes in a literate and courteous fashion, and unlike some writers in this field treats his readership as thinking adults. This is a book that all readers of *Magonia* should read. *Peter Rogerson*.

BORD, Janet and Colin, Modern Mysteries of Britain, one hundred years of strange events, Grafton Books, 1987, £14.95.

The Bord's latest compendium is a well-arranged and tightly packed collection of the vast range of forteen events which have been recorded in these

islands between 1885 and 1985. It is difficult to find any significant case which has been omitted, and as is the case with all the Bord's books it is well illustrated, both with archive photographs and prints, and original material from Colin Bord's camera.

It seems almost unnecessary to describe the range of the book in any detail - if you can think of a forteen phenomenon, it's here: trapped toads to teleportations, poltergeists to pumas, UFOs to underwater monsters. Of particular value are chronological and geographical listings of the mysteries included. All in all an extremely valuable reference guide.

And yet... and yet... There is something curiously unsatisfying about this book. Is it that we've seen it all before, from the Bords and in the pages of *Fortean Times* and even *Magonia*? Is it that after ten or so books and more than twenty years 'in the business' we were rather hoping they would be moving away from listings and starting to put the wide range of phenomena they have studied into some sort of context?

Is it that we are beginning to think that a new book from the Bords is rather less of an event than it once was, and rather more a routine part of a publisher's corporate plan. I do hope not. *John Rimmer*



Janet Bord interviews a phantom puma witness

KURTZ, Paul (Ed.), A Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology, Prometheus, 1985, £14.95

EDGE, Hyatt L., MORRIS, Robert L., PALMER, John, and RUSH, Joseph H. Foundation of Parapsychology: Exploring the boundaries of human capability, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986, £9.95

FRAZIER, Kendrick (Ed.), Science Confronts the Paranormal, Prometheus, 1986, £12.95

Three large paperback volumes here represent the range of responses to psi.

The *Handbook* is certainly the largest with over 700 pages and thirty papers, some reprints and some prepared specially for this volume. In general they represent a reasoned, intelligent, 'internal' criticism by such people as Christopher Scott, Gerd Hövelmann, P. Hoebens and Susan Blackmore, as well as hard-line critics such as James Randi and Martin Gardner.

Of special interest are 'A Critical Overview of Parapsychology' by Ray Hyman; 'Fraudulent Children in Psychological Research' by Fraser Nicol; Betty Marwick's demolition of Soal; 'Parapsychology and its Critics' by Douglas Stokes; 'The Adventures of a psi-inhibitory Experimenter' by Susan Blackmore, and Hövelmann's bibliography of sceptical literature and critical examination of the Near-Death Experience.

Hövelmann, Blackmore and Stokes represent a 'new parapsychology' which, in Blackmore's terms, will maintain the interest in anomalous experiences while liberating them from the straightjacket of psi. Traditional parapsychologist John Beloff responds, though as he now appears to be suffering from an advanced case of Inglitis this adds to the sceptical case!

All papers except one or two are readily comprehensible to the lay person, which is more than can be said for much of *Foundations of Parapsychology*, which describes itself as a textbook of parapsychology. Many of the problems discussed by the contributors to the *Handbook* are really only touched on here in one chapter, and too often 'findings' are presented without any critical sense, or even any sense of the ridiculous.

This reviewer, having no deep interest in ever more elaborate guessing games, or great knowledge of statistics, turned instead to Part III, where reasonable chapters on psi and science and the problem of survival are spoiled by a foolish piece on the 'Socio-Cultural Aspects of Psi', in which white South-Africans' 'wonder tales about the Kaffirs' are reported with a straight face, 'new-age' nonsense is churned out, and the pseudo-scientific ramblings of 'psychic archeologist' Jeffrey Goodman are described as 'legitimate'.

Confronts is a selection of articles and book reviews from *Sceptical Inquirer*, and is more lightweight than the previous works. It is overloaded with Randi, Gardner, Klass and other members of the rationalists' version of the Moral Majority. As readers of Lewis Wolpert's article in the *Guardian* (24th December 1986) will gather the real objection the CSICOPers have to psychics and psi is that these offend against the Puritan hard work principle by promising knowledge on the cheap - "I didn't get where I am today without studying theoretical physics for seventy years, now along comes John Pseudoscientist stealing the bread out of my mouth!" This probably explains the bad temper.

Best is P H Hoebens on Croisset the Clairvoyant, and his pompous and fraudulent mentor the great 'Herr Professor' Wilhelm Tenhoeff. The parallels with CSICOP's own devotion to 'The Amazing' himself is not, however, commented upon. *Peter Rogerson*

WILFORD, John Noble, *The Riddle of the Dinosaur*, Faber & Faber, 1986, £14.95

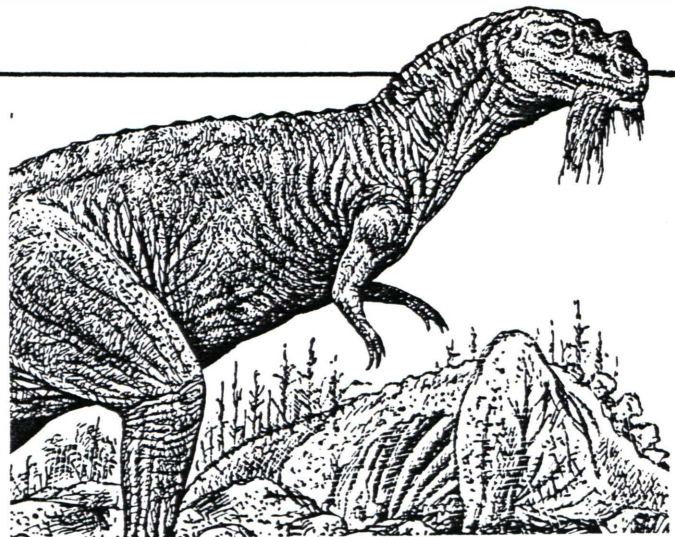
"The wonder of dinosaurs", as Pulitzer Prize winning science writer John Noble Wilford sees it "is that they are an enigma beyond solution". Which must be why so many people without palaeontological training enough to tell their Archaeopteryx from their elbow queue up to speculate about them, not least about whatever was responsible for ensuring that the dinosaurs aren't with us nowadays. *Riddle...* avoids the usual pitfalls of books written for dinosaur-junkies who don't happen to be trained palaeontologists. It emerges quite effortlessly as one of

the most original and stimulating forays into this heavily written topic in years.

The title is slightly deceptive, though. *Riddle...* actually tells a lot less about dinosaurs than about the people who study them; the geologists, the palaeontologists and (more recently, but not always to the wholesale delight of the aforementioned) the astrophysicists. Mr Wilford's book explores dinosaurs not so much as unusual and very extinct animals, but as a device against which the practice of Science can be measured - the re-evaluation of past doctrines, the challenges to established lines of thinking, the exchanges of old theoretical models and methodologies for new ones. The evolution of prehistoric life forms mirrors the evolution of our fresh form of thought relating to them. Ultimately, getting the right answer to the riddle of what dinosaurs were doesn't matter as much as how we attempt to solve it in the first place.

The science-in-action approach excuses the fact that there have been better books on dinosaurs as living, breathing creatures, or about the historical steps to their discovery; Alan Charig's *A New Look at the Dinosaurs* for one, Edwin Colbert's classic *Men and Dinosaurs* (which Mr Wilford duly acknowledges) for another. Not that *Riddle...* is deficient in either department. Far from it; the author has an eye for the telling biographical detail which brings to life personalities almost as far beyond modern readers' retrieval as Triceratops or Megalosaurus. There is the true story of how Gideon Mantell came to find the first Iguanodon (differing markedly from the way he told it afterwards). There are vignettes of Reed smashing up bones he couldn't remove so that rival collectors should not get at them, and palaeontology's *bête noir*, Dr Robert Bakker alarming his older peers by insisting that birds don't deserve a separate zoological class to themselves because they're only dinosaurs after all.

But the book really takes off from Chapter 10 with a series of deft, pithy resumés of palaeontology as it is today: the problems, the controversies, reassessments and reassessments of reassessments. Were the dinosaurs warm



blooded? Are birds their direct descendants? Did their 160-million-year reign end when the Earth was struck by an all-devastating asteroid/meteor/comet? Raising any one of these subjects is a good way to raise a palaeontological fist-fight, but the author does so with balance inimpair and eyes unblackened. Besides avoiding the facile rush to promote one view at the expense of another, *Riddle...* scores through the way it gives access to the rarified upper atmospheres of the subject, presenting technicalia that seldom escapes the pages of specialist journals. It creates the impression that you are possessed of the latest dinosauric information - you probably never gate-crashed a conference on Late Cretaceous extinctions, but this book makes it feel that way.

It was a peculiar relief to see such a well-tuned, comprehensive treatment of the Alvarez 'killer meteor', arguably the most important scientific hypothesis of the decade, certainly the most controversial. Too many people have been misled on this. The less cautious have exposed the idea of the dinosaurs blasted by the effects of an asteroid/meteor hitting Earth at the end of the Cretaceous because it seemed such a fine rebuttal of the views held by the more staid researchers. Let's face it; we all enjoy a good cataclysm, especially one that offers total answers to unsolved great questions; apart from which, palaeontologists (traditionally seen as a degree less lively than the fossils they handle) have been an easy target for custard pies. Some folk believe that Alvarez has solved the Great Dinosaur mystery, and we can all go home. Mr Wilford care-

fully points out why we should stay a little longer, charting the ebb and flow of the debate and pointing out why the catastrophists haven't carried all before them. The penultimate chapter brings the saga up to date with a progress report on the newest phase of the cataclysm hypothesis: the so-called 'Death Star' idea and its relevance to the proposed 26-million-year cycle of extinctions. It's hard to see how this could have been done better.

The balance and up-to-the-minuteness are an illusion; for one thing the book has a faint but noticeable Stateside bias. Granted that most of the ear-catching debates have been staged in the USA, but it misses some of the British contributions, which have often exhibited wittily effective ways of putting their objections over. It was our own Dr Halstead who couched a provocative statement which, if verified, will send more than just the killer meteor theory back into orbit. There now seems to be some evidence that seven dinosaur species survived the great extinction, Halstead mentioned this in an article for the *Guardian* last September, just as Wilford's book had its British debut.

Yes, the later-than-we-thought demise of the dinosaurs may have wrecked an awful lot of theories and paradigms, and wasted an awful lot of computer-power. It's a lot worse than giving a Brontosaurus skeleton the wrong head! But far from being a disaster, it would be just another stage in the debate that opened some 20 years ago and shows no sign of flagging. *The Riddle of the Dinosaur* is an ideal way of getting in on the biggest scientific show in town. *Michael Goss*